

Listen Up! the Secret to Becoming a Great Communicator  
( コミュニケーションの達人になる! )

Author: Keith Harmeyer

Master the art of effective communication, and you can accomplish just about anything.

The ability to communicate masterfully is like The Midas Touch. It allows you to turn virtually any opportunity into pure gold. Through skillful communication, success becomes possible in every area of your life  
- career, relationships, finances. Effective communication is key to all of these and more.

So just what is it that makes someone a great communicator? What is that rare ability that allows some people to forge real, meaningful, mutually-satisfying connections with others?

For years I've taught classes, conducted seminars and coached individuals on their communication and presentation skills. And just about everyone I've worked with believes that being an effective communicator simply means being able to get their point across, to successfully express their thoughts, ideas and feelings to others.

But in fact, that is just a very small part of the equation. This ability alone will not allow you to forge meaningful connections. In fact, if all you focus on is your personal agenda, there's a good chance you'll get nowhere. How many times have you observed an eloquent speaker with what appears to be all the right techniques, a great vocabulary, all poise and polish, only to find that his or her words ultimately fall flat?

Look up "communication" in the dictionary, and you'll see that it derives from the Latin word *communicare*, "to impart, share," literally "to make common." So real communication isn't simply a transmission of ideas; it's an exchange, a dialogue of sorts. Effective communication is a sharing of information, a coming together of two unique points-of-view, the communicator's and the person being communicated with.

Sometimes those points-of-view are in sync, sometimes they are in conflict; but they are always distinct. No one's perspective, experience, interpretation, concerns, goals, mood, etc. is identical to yours. Understanding this fact is key to making powerful connections.

If you take nothing else away from this article, please remember this statement:  
effective communication is always a two-way street.

In order for real, meaningful communication to take place, information must flow in both directions - not just from you, but to you.

By fully appreciating this concept, you will be able to do what is necessary to make real connections with others, and ultimately improve your odds of getting what you want from each communication encounter.

Just how can you make this exchange possible? Stop talking -- and listen.

Most of us are actually pretty good at talking. We talk like crazy. We talk about our problems, our accomplishments, our relationships, our headaches, our dreams. We talk about everything that matters to us. Unfortunately, those issues are rarely what's of greatest interest to others.

On the flip side, sadly most of us are lousy listeners. In fact, most people, even when they appear to be listening intently to someone else, are actually lost in their own thoughts, often thinking about what they will say next.

Really hearing what others have to say, what matters to them, what they want, what they fear, what they hope for, will ultimately make you better able to connect with them, and help them to understand your message.

Being an effective listener is probably the single most important quality of a great communicator. Just observe some of the best there are. It's often been reported by those who know him that President Bill Clinton makes every person he speaks with feel like they're the only person in the room. The Reverend Billy Graham is able to touch the emotions of thousands of people at the same time, who feel that he's speaking personally with them. Winston Churchill tapped into the fears and dreams of an entire nation, and inspired them to greatness. Think about the great communicators you've met in your own life, and how they somehow seemed to speak a language you really understood.

Speaking the language of others. That's what real communication is all about.

Think of it this way. Supposed you had to deliver some important information to someone,

but that person only spoke Japanese, and you did not.

What would you do? You might have your message translated for you, or have an interpreter on hand.

But if you didn't figure out how to somehow impart your message in the language that person understood, it would fall on deaf ears. No matter how eloquently you made your point, it would remain meaningless, because you didn't speak the language.

If you're going to be one of the world's great communicators, you will have to learn the language of others, and then frame your message in a manner they will understand and appreciate.

Here are a few things you can start doing right now to make yourself a more effective communicator.

### 1. Train yourself to really listen.

When you're attempting to connect with someone, really focus on them, what they're saying and how they're behaving.

Consciously try to block everything else out - your thoughts, distractions around you, etc.

Make a point of not speaking yourself until the other person has expressed a complete thought.

Fight the urge to interrupt or finish their sentences. Try to be genuinely interested in every word they say.

### 2. Acknowledge others' words and feelings.

When it is your turn to talk, begin by confirming for the other person that you really heard them.

There are several ways to do this. You might want to comment on what they've just told you.

"I can imagine that was difficult." You might ask a question. "Wow, what happened after that?"

Mirroring is another good technique for letting someone know you heard them.

Basically, it is simply repeating back to the other person what they just said,

and asking them for confirmation that you understood.

"So it sounds like this was a really positive experience for you, is that right?"

When you let people know you're really listening to them, they will be more interested

when it's time for you to share your thoughts with them.

### 3. Listen with your eyes.

There may be no better way of letting someone know you're listening than by maintaining strong, consistent eye contact.

This is very important when you're speaking, but even more so when you're the listener.

Don't look down. Don't look around the room. Don't look at other people. Look into the eyes of the person speaking to you, and they'll know you're interested in what they're saying.

(Important! This might sound crazy, but you have to pick one eye to look at.

That's right, left or right, your choice. But you have to focus on one. If you don't, your gaze will drift from one to the other. You'll exhibit what is commonly referred to as "shifty eyes," which most people interpret as a sign of nervousness.)

4. Relate your thoughts to theirs.

Finally, it's your turn to express your ideas, feelings and desires. To be most effective, try to build your thoughts on what you've just heard.

"I'm glad you brought that up, because I've been thinking about something very similar."

Even if your point-of-view is opposite theirs, you will make it more meaningful to your listener

by pointing that fact out. "I certainly hear what you're saying, and I understand why you think that way.

But I have a different perspective on the situation.

Let me explain." By connecting your point to theirs, you make it relevant to them.

It all boils down to this: masterful communication is a conscious act. It requires focus, attention, forethought and an appreciation of the person with whom you hope to forge a connection.

Take the time to learn and apply these few skills, and you'll be on your way to becoming a great communicator, and to reaping untold rewards in the process.

Article Source:

<http://www.articlesbase.com/business-articles/listen-up-the-secret-to-becoming-a-great-communicator-237970.html>

About the Author:

Keith Harmeyer, creator of The SuperSkill, a proven method for using traditional marketing techniques to achieve personal and professional success, is EVP of Marketing and Creative Services at C2 Creative in New York City. A marketing, communication and presentation skills expert,

Keith can be contacted at [kaharmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:kaharmeyer@gmail.com), or you can visit his website at <http://www.thesuperskill.com>.